



# Of Muscles and Men: Essays on the Sword and Sandal Film

*Michael G. Cornelius*

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Few movie genres have highlighted the male body more effectively than the "sword-and-sandal" film, where the rippling torso and the bulging muscle are displayed for all to appreciate. Carrying his phallic sword and dressed in traditional garb calculated to bring attention to his magnificent physique, the sword-and-sandal hero is capable of toppling great nations, rescuing heroines, defeating monsters, and generally saving the day. Each of these essays examines the issues of masculinity and utility addressed in the sword-and-sandal genre. The contributors offer insights on a film form which showcases its male protagonists as heroic, violent, fleshy, and, in the end, extremely useful.

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